

Message Text

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ORIGIN SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 R

DRAFTED BY AF/E:GSCOTT:AB
APPROVED BY IO/UNA:AHOLLOWAY
S/S-O:JTHYDEN
AF:TWSEEYE
UNA:JFTEFFT

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-----009250 210335Z /75-61

O R 210306Z JUL 77
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO USMISSION GENEVA IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY PARIS IMMEDIATE
INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA
AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO
AMEMBASSY DJIBOUTI
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY CAIRO KHARTOUM
AMEMBASSY LONDON
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

S E C R E T STATE 170060

EXDIS FOR AMBASSADOR YOUNG

E.O. 11652:GDS

TAGS: PDEV, SO, ET, US, MASS, SU, SA

SUBJECT: BRIEFING PAPER ON THE HORN OF AFRICA FOR
AMBASSADOR YOUNG'S MEETING WITH FRENCH OFFICIALS

1. AMBASSADOR YOUNG SHOULD FEEL FREE TO DRAW ON THE FOLLOW-
ING IN HIS CONVERSATIONS WITH FRENCH OFFICIALS ON THE HORN.

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2. THE FIGHTING BETWEEN ETHNIC SOMALI IRREGULARS AND
ETHIOPIAN TROOPS IN THE OGADEN REGION OF EASTERN ETHIOPIA
CONTINUES AT A HIGH LEVEL. WHILE NO SOMALI REGULAR UNITS
APPEAR TO HAVE BEEN COMMITTED TO COMBAT, WE HAVE REPORTS
THAT THE RANKS OF THE IRREGULAR FORCES HAVE BEEN STRENGTHENED
BY ADDITION OF REGULAR SOMALI SOLDIERS IN MUFTI. PRESIDENT
SIAD APPEARS DETERMINED TO SEIZE THE OGADEN NOW WHILE

ETHIOPIA IS WEAK AND BEFORE SOVIET MILITARY ASSISTANCE TO THE ADDIS GOVERNMENT CAN HAVE REAL EFFECT. AT PRESENT HE APPEARS LIKELY TO CONTINUE TO RELY ON THE IRREGULAR FORCES, BUT WE BELIEVE HE WOULD USE THE SOMALI NATIONAL ARMY IF IT WERE NECESSARY TO DO SO TO SECURE HIS GAINS.

3. MEANWHILE IN ERITREA THE ERITREAN LIBERATION FRONT AND THE ERITREAN PEOPLES' LIBERATION FRONT HAVE BOTH LAUNCHED MAJOR OFFENSIVES AGAINST ETHIOPIAN-HELD POSITIONS AND, LIKE THE SOMALIS, APPEAR TO HAVE SELECTED THIS AS THE TIME TO WIN THE INDEPENDENCE OF THE TERRITORY. THE ETHIOPIANS ARE HARD PRESSED IN THE OGADEN AND ERITREA. ETHIOPIAN FORCES AT KEREN SURRENDERED TO THE INSURGENTS IN MID-JULY.

4. PRESIDENT SIAD CONTINUES TO SOLICIT ARMS FROM WESTERN AND ARAB STATES, BUT HE HAS YET TO MAKE ANY MOVE TO BREAK OR EVEN SUBSTANTIALLY REDUCE HIS SOVIET CONNECTION. WE HAVE NO INFORMATION WITH WHICH TO CONFIRM THE PRESS REPORTS OF THE WITHDRAWAL OF SOVIET ADVISORS FROM SOMALIA. SIAD HAS RECEIVED ARMS OR THE PROMISE OF THEM FROM A NUMBER OF COUNTRIES. EGYPT AND SAUDI ARABIA HAVE ALREADY MADE DELIVERIES OF SMALL ARMS. FRANCE AND GREAT BRITAIN HAVE AGREED TO SUPPLY ARMS AS WELL. EMBASSY PARIS HAS BEEN ASKED TO INFORM GOF OF PRES. CARTER'S DECISION IN PRINCIPLE TO PROVIDE SOMALIA WITH MILITARY ITEMS. (IF EMBASSY HAS NOT YET BEEN ABLE TO INFORM GOF, YOU MIGHT WISH TO DO SO.)

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WE HAVE YET TO DECIDE ON ITEMS, AMOUNTS, TERMS OF DATES OF DELIVERY, AND ANYTHING WE SUPPLY WOULD BE INTENDED TO FILL GAPS IN SOMALIA'S DEFENSIVE RPT DEFENSIVE REQUIREMENTS. WE CONTINUE TO BELIEVE THAT WESTERN POLICIES TOWARDS SOMALIA WOULD BENEFIT FROM CLOSE COORDINATION AND WE WILL KEEP GOF INFORMED OF THE DETAILS OF OUR MILITARY AND ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS AS THEY DEVELOP.

5. DJIBOUTI: FRANCE BROUGHT THE NEW REPUBLIC OF DJIBOUTI SUCCESSFULLY TO A PEACEFUL INDEPENDENCE ON JUNE 27. SHORTLY BEFORE INDEPENDENCE, HOWEVER, THE ADDIS-DJIBOUTI RAILWAY WAS CUT BY SOMALIA IRREGULARS IN ETHIOPIA, AND IT IS UNLIKELY TO BE REPAIRED SOON. IN ADDITION TO THE CHRONIC ECONOMIC PROBLEMS OF THE TERRITORY, INTENSIFIED BY THE CUTTING OF THE RAILWAY, THE FIGHTING BETWEEN ETHIOPIANS AND SOMALIS HAS HEIGHTENED ETHNIC TENSIONS IN DJIBOUTI.

6. ABDALLAH KAMIL, NOW THE DJIBOUTI FOREIGN MINISTER, PAID A BRIEF VISIT TO WASHINGTON ON JULY 8. WE FOUND HIS MANNER AND GRASP OF THE SALIENT QUESTIONS TO BE IMPRESSIVE. WE EXPECT TO BE SENDING A SMALL AID SURVEY TEAM SHORTLY TO SEE WHAT CONTRIBUTION WE CAN MAKE TO THE GENERAL EFFORT

TO ASSIST DJIBOUTI'S ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT. WE CONTINUE
TO BELIEVE THAT THE FRENCH MILITARY PRESENCE IN DJIBOUTI
IS VITAL TO THE INDEPENDENCE OF THE NEW STATE.

7. WE WOULD BE INTERESTED IN HAVING THE LATEST FRENCH
VIEWS OF THE HORN DEVELOPMENTS AND THE PROSPECTS OF
DJIBOUTI. WE SHOULD PARTICULARLY LIKE TO KNOW WHAT
INDICATIONS THEY HAVE OF SAUDI INTENTIONS TO ASSIST THE
NEW REPUBLIC. VANCE

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: BRIEFING MATERIALS, POLITICAL SITUATION, MEETINGS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 21-Jul-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 22 May 2009
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977STATE170060
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: GSCOTT:AB
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770258-1013
Format: TEL
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions:
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770733/aaaabcao.tel
Line Count: 124
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 4ed9ea65-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ORIGIN SS
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 07-Feb-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1789156
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: BRIEFING PAPER ON THE HORN OF AFRICA FOR AMBASSADOR YOUNG'S MEETING WITH FRENCH OFFICIALS
TAGS: PDEV, MASS, SO, ET, US, SU, SA, FT, (YOUNG, ANDREW J)
To: GENEVA PARIS
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/4ed9ea65-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009